



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE VALLEY

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JUSTIN BAYLESS DONATES \$500,000 TO BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE VALLEY

Bayless Entrepreneurship Program to Help Youth Build Skills, Mindset to Create Successful Enterprises

PHOENIX (March 1, 2022) – Knowing the value of creating meaningful, good-paying jobs for teens in under-resourced communities, entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist Justin Bayless has donated \$500,000 to Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley.

The funds will be used to equip youth with the tools and resources they need to become successful small business owners, particularly in growing trade and in-demand fields that do not require a college degree.

“Not every kid has a desire to go to college,” Bayless said. “Through the Bayless Entrepreneurship Program, we will set these youth on a path to success by teaching them essential business skills, harnessing their entrepreneurial creativity and helping them transform their ideas into tangible enterprises.”

The program will be an extension of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley’s AZYouthforce, which helps teens explore their career options while preparing for and connecting with workplace opportunities.

Established in 2018, AZYouthforce builds teens’ technical and soft skills through a 30-hour training academy that covers everything from interviewing and resume development to financial literacy and critical thinking. Participants who complete the training are placed in paid internships with local and national companies. They also can earn certificates in industries such as retailing and IT.

Funding from the Bayless family will expand the initiative by enabling teens to earn an academic certificate, gain additional real-world advice through one-on-one mentoring with academic and business leaders, and develop a customized business plan with the potential to win seed money for its implementation.

The program will be comprised of five stages, including recruitment and orientation, essential skills training, an entrepreneurship certificate program, business plan execution and post-program support.

“Beyond building a personal foundation for success, the program will create equity for teens regardless of their background or their families’ socioeconomic status,” said Marcia Mintz, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley.

Bayless's affinity for funding an entrepreneurship program for Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley comes from personal experience.

At age 11, he and his brother were regulars at one of the Club's after-school programs and they have remained involved with the organization ever since.

Bayless also is an entrepreneur who, at age 9, began accompanying his father to work as he built his healthcare practice.

"The purpose of the partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley is to give young people a path to overcome barriers so they can contribute to their communities," Bayless said. "This will help them become successful and self-sustaining," he added, "while also helping future generations."

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley will accept the next group of participants in the AZYouthforce Academy and Bayless Entrepreneurship program in mid-April. For more information or to submit an application, visit <https://azyouthforce.org/apply/>.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley offers affordable after-school and summer programs for 13,000+ young people in grades K-12. At Clubs across the Valley, BGCAZ provides award-winning programs designed to change the lives of young people. For over 70 years, BGCAZ has been creating equity and opportunity for youth through academic, social, and workforce opportunities. We help young people make healthy decisions and focus on social and emotional development to build resilient young adults. Most importantly, we work to develop strong character and leadership skills by creating positive connections to caring adults and their communities. For more information: visit bgcaz.org.

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